

Mr. Speaker, despite reservations about certain aspects of this appropriations bill, I will vote in favor of funding the federal government for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2011. The process over the past year, that has led us to this vote, has been filled with missed opportunities, disappointments, and extreme political posturing. This compromise agreement is a success for President Obama who prevented a government shutdown and defended America's seniors, students, working families, and the fragile economic recovery. Federal funding for Planned Parenthood and implementation of the Affordable Care Act, both under constant attack from Republicans, were prevented from being eliminated to the benefit of Americans in need of access to health care.

The Republican Tea Party crusade to eliminate \$100 billion in 2011 from domestic discretionary spending and their threats to shutdown the federal government failed. At the end of the day, this compromise cuts \$38.5 billion from the budget. Yet, will yield only \$352 million in reduced federal outlays in 2011, according to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO). This is because much of the funding eliminated in H.R. 1473 was excess program funds that were never going to be spent anyway.

H.R. 1473 is a compromise between Democrats and Republicans. Many onerous, destructive cuts proposed by the Tea Party Republican House majority in H.R. 1 were eliminated from this compromise. Investments in job creation, health care reform implementation, voluntary family planning services, public broadcasting, international development assistance, and services for homeless veterans are all included in this bill. Despite Republican efforts to gut services for the unemployed, the sick, women, and the poorest of the poor around the world, many harmful cuts were avoided in this final bill.

Still, there are budget cuts and policy riders in this bill, which I strongly disagree with and have a long record of opposing. The cuts to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) of \$1.6 billion or 16% will diminish the ability of this agency to protect human health, pursue polluters, and address the grave challenges presented by global climate change. These cuts to EPA are wrongheaded and reflect a perspective that corporate profits are more important than regulating pollution and protecting human health. I find this objectionable, and I will work to continue to fund EPA's vital regulatory role in the 2012 Fiscal Year.

Deep cuts to community health centers are of great concern to me. The \$503 million cut to the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program – which provides nutritional assistance to young children and pregnant, postpartum and breast-feeding women – is a direct Republican attack on

our society's most vulnerable. These are two examples of senseless, mean-spirited cuts that target low-income Americans.

Funding school vouchers in the District of Columbia is a policy I strongly oppose because it undermines public schools and diverts scarce resources away from public education. Another rider which I strongly opposed prohibits the District of Columbia from using its own local tax revenue to provide legal health care services to women. This intrusion into the affairs of local government is an example of Republican hypocrisy as they impose their ideological agenda on struggling citizens.

There is no doubt that the federal government is facing a fiscal threat that must be addressed. Deficit reduction is a priority for the American people, for the financial markets, and for Congress. The House Republicans' hard line on spending masks their policies of increasing the deficit by hundreds of billions by cutting taxes for millionaires and billionaires, protecting the defense contractors from cuts to eliminate waste and abuse, and heaping generous tax breaks on oil companies and other special interests. By focusing all spending cuts on domestic discretionary programs which makes up only 12% of the federal budget the Republicans advance an ideological agenda, but do nothing to repair our nation's fiscal situation or strengthen the economy.

I will not celebrate the passage of this bill, but the process that lead us to this point should be instructive to the many sectors of our community that depend on the federal government as an equal partner. The consequence of last November's election victory by the Tea Party means every federal investment in education, health care access, services to the poor, the disabled, and the homeless is at risk of being eliminated. Federal support for job creating investments in community development, the arts, green technology, workforce training, and life-saving medical research are all at risk by this Tea Party majority that is determined to slash federal programs.

Since January the American people have witnessed the Tea Party Republican majority in Congress and the accompanying agenda. The passage of H.R. 1 should be indicative of how destructive their agenda would be to America if it were not for a Democratic majority in the U.S. Senate and the leadership of President Obama in the White House. Between now and November 2012 the American people need to decide what role they want the federal government to play in their lives. The future of America is being debated now, but it will be decided in the next election. I strongly urge my fellow citizens – especially those who believe government plays a valuable role in our society – to become fully engaged in the policy and political process.

The outcome of this year's appropriations process, H.R. 1473, is a compromise agreement. I support this agreement, but compromise does not mean I cede my values or priorities. In this political environment, I believe this compromise is the best deal possible to keep the federal government working, and I will not vote to shutdown the government.

Congress needs to pass H.R. 1473, fund the federal government for the remainder of 2011, and get serious about meeting the priorities of the American people, like creating jobs, preventing a fiscal crisis, and making America competitive in this global economy.